

STATE OF MICHIGAN
DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY HEALTH

**ORDER FINDING IMMINENT DANGER
TO THE PUBLIC HEALTH
AND
REQUIRING CORRECTIVE ACTION**

This order is made pursuant to Section 2251 of the Public Health Code, Public Act 368 of 1978, being MCL 333.2251.

On August 1, 2005, the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention brought matters of concern to the health of Michigan citizens to my attention as Acting Chief Medical Executive of the Michigan Department of Community Health. Pursuant to a Delegation of Authority authorizing me to act on behalf of the Director of the Department of Community Health in her absence, I make the following determinations:

- 1) Rodents (order *Rodentia*) capable of transmitting lymphocytic choriomeningitis virus (LCMV) have been transported into the state of Michigan;
- 2) Beginning February 2005, certain pet stores have received shipments of these potentially infected rodents from Mid-South Distributors in Ohio.
- 3) Pet rodents (*e.g.*, hamsters, dwarf hamsters, guinea pigs, and mice) infected with LCMV are capable of transmitting LCMV to humans;
- 4) LCMV infection in humans with normal immune systems usually causes either asymptomatic or mild, self-limited illness, characterized by any or all of the following symptoms: fever, malaise, lack of appetite, muscle aches, headaches, nausea, and vomiting;
- 5) Aseptic meningitis also can occur in some individuals, but the infection is rarely fatal;
- 6) LCMV infection during the first or second trimester of pregnancy can cause severe illness or developmental defects in the fetus, including hydrocephalus, psychomotor retardation, and blindness;

- 7) LCMV infection is a well-known occupational risk for laboratory workers who work with LCMV-infected laboratory rodents;
- 8) An outbreak associated with pet hamsters sold by a single distributor was reported in 1974, when 181 symptomatic cases in persons with hamster contact were identified in 12 states; no deaths occurred. The outbreak was brought under control by voluntary cessation of sale and destruction of the infected breeding stock;
- 9) All residents of the state of Michigan are at risk of exposure to LCMV infection through exposure to animals that may be capable of transmitting the virus to humans;
- 10) This condition or practice could reasonably be expected to cause disease, or serious physical harm immediately or before the imminence of the danger can be eliminated through enforcement procedures otherwise provided;
- 11) This situation constitutes an imminent danger to the health or lives of residents of the state of Michigan; and
- 12) This determination is based on information provided by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, which investigated potential infection after receiving reports of illness in four solid organ-transplant recipients who were later diagnosed from LCMV infection from a common organ donor. Three of the four organ recipients died 23-27 days after transplantation. Epidemiological investigation traced the source of the virus to a pet hamster purchased by the donor from a pet store in Rhode Island that had been supplied by Mid-South Distributors. Testing of other rodents at this distributor revealed two additional hamsters and a guinea pig, infected with LCMV. It is likely that LCMV-infected pet rodents have been distributed by Mid-South Distributors to pet stores in the Northeast and Midwest, including Michigan.

Now, Therefore, It Is Hereby Ordered that:

- A) The Intra-state transportation, display, sale, any other distribution or release into the environment of animals belonging to the following species, shipped or received from the Ohio Mid-South facility from February 2005 to present, IS PROHIBITED until further order:
 - members of the order *Rodentia*, including:
 - hamsters
 - dwarf hamsters
 - guinea pigs
 - mice

- B) The Intra-state transportation, display, sale, any other distribution, or release into the environment of animals caged with any rodents shipped or received from the Ohio Mid-South facility, from February 2005 to present, IS PROHIBITED until further order, including:
- Any and all hamsters, dwarf hamsters, guinea pigs, and mice sharing the same cage or habitat or in cages adjacent to one another;
 - Any and all hamsters, dwarf hamsters, guinea pigs, and mice cared for or handled such that there is a possibility of cross-contamination (*e.g.*, inadequate hand washing, multiple cage cleanings without washing hands in between, etc.);
 - Any and all hamsters, dwarf hamsters, guinea pigs, and mice that were placed in cages before the cages had been disinfected (*i.e.*, with bleach or Lysol) after housing other rodents; or
 - Any and all hamsters, dwarf hamsters, guinea pigs, and mice that had been exposed to potentially contaminated articles involved in rodent care (*e.g.*, water bottles, food/food dishes, bedding, toys, shelter, etc.)
- C) Before resuming the display, sale, or distribution of pet rodents by pet stores or other facilities covered by this order, the facilities must clean and disinfect all cages, containers, and equipment that hold or are used for rodents in their facilities, and take steps to ensure that cross contamination between new supplies of rodents and potentially infected animals will not occur. Employees who are pregnant or with compromised immune systems shall not be involved in these activities.
- D) This order does not apply to the transportation of the listed species to veterinarians or animal control officials. Also, it does not apply to authorized employees and agents of the Michigan Departments of Community Health, Agriculture, and Natural Resources in the discharge of their official duties.
- E) A copy of this order shall be delivered to newspapers of general circulation and other news media;
- F) A copy of this order may be posted in a prominent location at sites where animals may be sold, distributed, or exchanged.
- G) This order may be amended to include other species as additional information about LCMV infection and its transmission is acquired.

Pursuant to Section 2261 of the Public Health Code, Public Act 368 of 1978, being MCL 333.2261, a person who violates this order is guilty of a misdemeanor punishable by imprisonment for not more than 6 months, or a fine of not more than \$200.00 or both.

Dated: August 8, 2005

Dean Sienko, M.D.
Acting Chief Medical Executive
Acting by Delegation of Authority from
Janet Olszewski, Director
Michigan Department of Community Health